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Milton - Hymn on the Morning of  
Christ's Nativity

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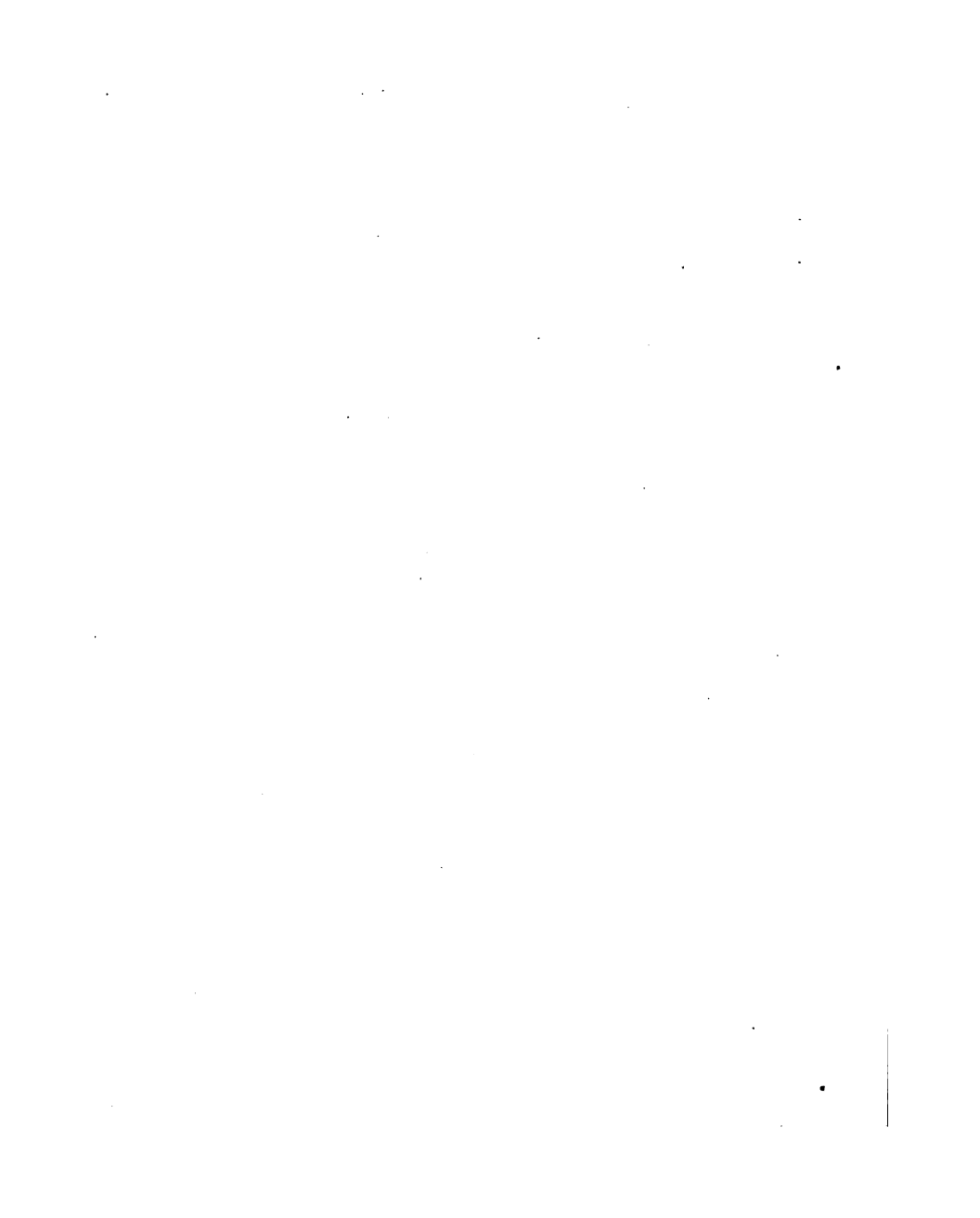


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on  
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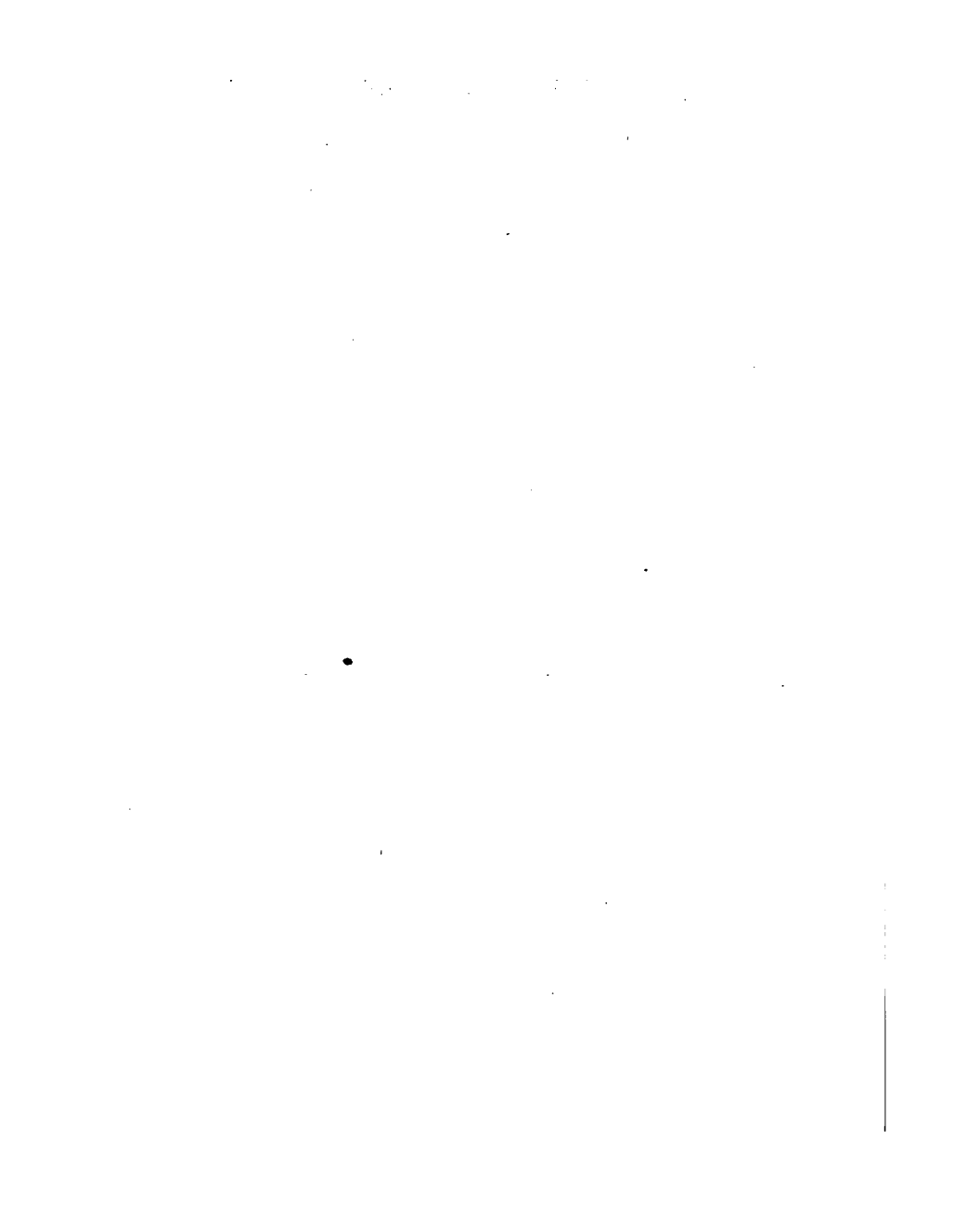
Milton











Hymn on the \*  
Morning of \*  
Christ's Nativity







*But see! the Virgin bless'd  
Hath laid her Babe to rest*

**Milton's Hymn &  
on the Morning of  
Christ's Nativity  
With Illustrations by & &  
Emily J. Harding and T. H.  
Robinson**

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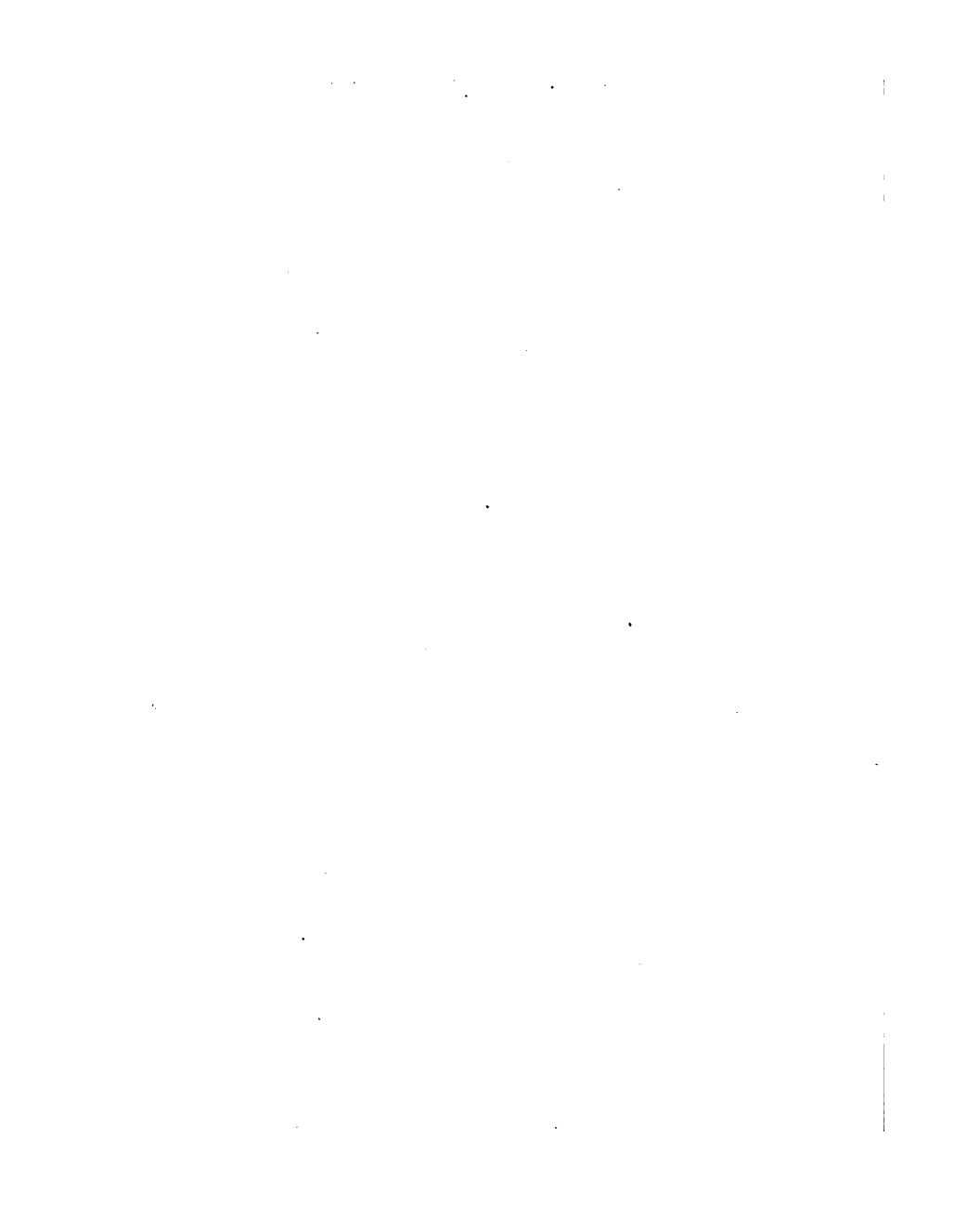
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CLASS OF 1915

July 11, 1931

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**The Morning of  
Christ's Nativity**

**T**HIS is the month, and this the happy morn,  
Wherein the Son of Heaven's Eternal King,  
Of wedded Maid and Virgin Mother born,  
Our great redemption from above did bring ;  
For so the holy sages once did sing,  
That he our deadly forfeit should release,  
And with his Father work us a perpetual peace.

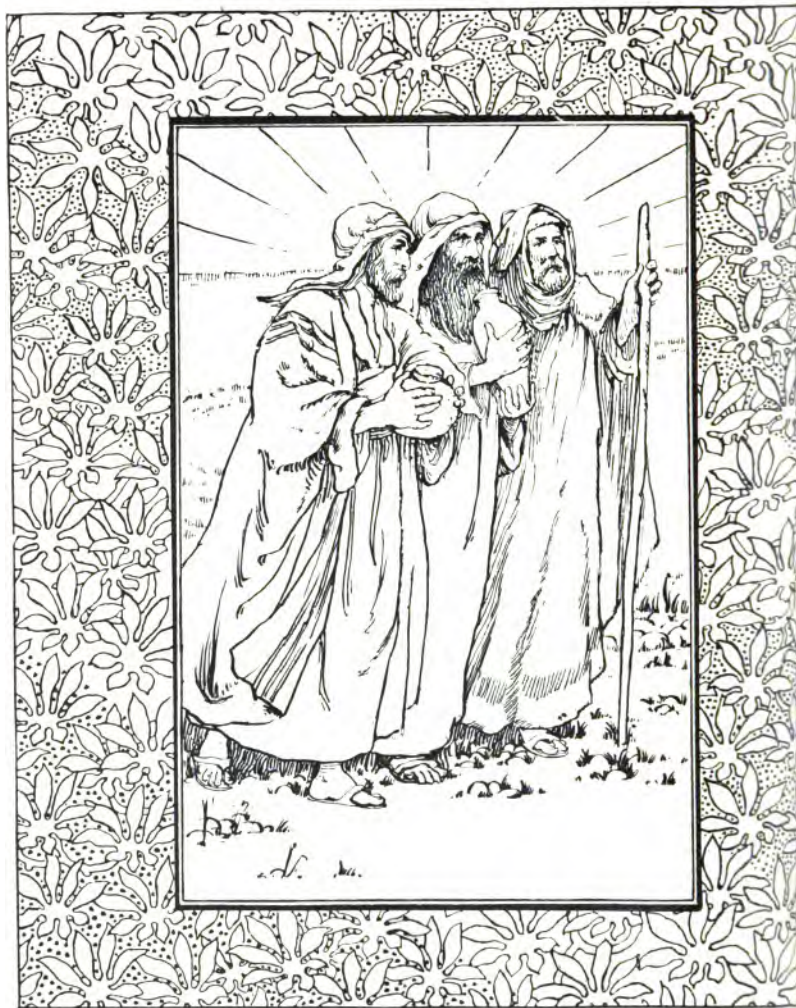




**T**HAT glorious form, that light unsufferable,  
And that far-beaming blaze of majesty,  
Wherewith he wont at Heaven's high council  
table  
To sit the midst of Trinal Unity,  
He laid aside ; and here with us to be,  
Forsook the courts of everlasting day,  
And chose with us a darksome house of mortal  
clay.

**S**AY, Heavenly Muse, shall not thy sacred vein  
Afford a present to the Infant God !  
Hast thou no verse, no hymn or solemn strain,  
To welcome him to this his new abode,  
Now, while the heaven, by the Sun's team untrod,  
Hath took no print of the approaching light,  
And all the spangled host keep watch in squadrons  
bright ?





SEE, how from far, upon the eastern road,  
The star-led wizards haste with odours sweet :  
O, run, prevent them with thy humble ode,  
And lay it lowly at his blessed feet ;  
Have thou the honour first thy Lord to greet,  
And join thy voice unto the Angel Choir,  
From out his secret altar touched with hallow'd  
fire.

## The Hymn

**I**T was the winter wild,  
While the heaven-born child  
All meanly wrapt in the rude manger lies;  
Nature, in awe to him,  
Had doff'd her gaudy trim,  
With her great Master so to sympathise :  
It was no season then for her  
To wanton with the Sun, her lusty paramour.

**O**NLY with speeches fair  
She wooes the gentle air  
To hide her guilty front with innocent snow ;  
And on her naked shame,  
Pollute with sinful blame,  
The saintly veil of maiden white to throw ;  
    Confounded, that her Maker's eyes  
Should look so near upon her foul deformities.

**B**UT he, her fears to cease,  
Sent down the meek-eyed Peace;  
She, crown'd with olive green, came softly sliding  
Down through the turning sphere,  
His ready harbinger,  
With turtle wing the amorous clouds dividing :  
And, waving wide her myrtle wand,  
She strikes a universal peace through sea and land.



**N**O war, or battle's sound,  
Was heard the world around :  
The idle spear and shield were high up-hung ;  
The hooked chariot stood  
Unstain'd with hostile blood ;  
The trumpet spake not to the armed throng ;  
And kings sat still with awful eye,  
As if they surely knew their sov'reign Lord was by.

**B**UT peaceful was the night,  
Wherein the Prince of Light  
His reign of peace upon the earth began :  
The winds, with wonder whist,  
Smoothly the waters kiss'd,  
Whispering new joys to the mild Ocean,  
Who now hath quite forgot to rave,  
While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmed  
wave.



**T**HE stars, with deep amaze,  
Stand fix'd in steadfast gaze,  
Bending one way their precious influence ;  
And will not take their flight,  
For all the morning light,  
Or Lucifer, that often warn'd them thence ;  
    But in their glimmering orbs did glow,  
Until their Lord himself bespake, and bid them go.

AND though the shady gloom  
Had given day her room,  
The Sun himself withheld his wonted speed ;  
And hid his head for shame,  
As his inferior flame  
The new enlighten'd world no more should need :  
    He saw a greater Sun appear  
Than his bright throne or burning axletree could  
    bear.





The shepherds on the lawn  
 Or'er the point of dawn  
 Sat simply chatting in a rustic row

When such music sweet  
 Their hearts and ears did greet  
 As never was by mortal finger strook

THE shepherds on the lawn,  
Or e'er the point of dawn,  
Sat simply chatting in a rustic row :  
Full little thought they than  
That the mighty Pan  
Was kindly come to live with them below :  
Perhaps their loves, or else their sheep,  
Was all that did their silly thoughts so busy keep :

WHEN such music sweet  
Their hearts and ears did greet,  
As never was by mortal finger strook ;  
Divinely-warbled voice  
Answering the stringed noise,  
As all their souls in blissful rapture took :  
The air, such pleasure loth to lose,  
With thousand echoes still prolongs each heavenly  
close.

**N**ATURE, that heard such sound,  
Beneath the hollow round  
Of Cynthia's seat, the Airy region thrilling,  
Now was almost won,  
To think her part was done,  
And that her reign had here its last fulfilling :  
    She knew such harmony alone  
Could hold all Heaven and Earth in happier  
    union.

**A**T last surrounds their sight  
A globe of circular light,  
That with long beams the shamefaced Night  
array'd ;  
The helmed cherubim,  
And sworded seraphim,  
Are seen in glittering ranks with wings display'd,  
Harping in loud and solemn choir,  
With unexpressive notes, to Heaven's new-born  
Heir.





**S**UCH music, as 'tis said,  
Before was never made,  
But when of old the Sons of Morning sung,  
While the Creator great  
His constellations set,  
And the well-balanced World on hinges hung ;  
    And cast the dark foundations deep,  
And bid the weltering waves their oozy channel  
    keep.

**R**ING out, ye crystal spheres ;  
Once bless our human ears,  
If ye have power to touch our senses so ;  
And let your silver chime  
Move in melodious time ;  
And let the bass of Heaven's deep organ blow ;  
And with your ninefold harmony  
Make up full consort to the angelic symphony.

**F**OR if such holy song  
Enwrap our fancy long,  
Time will run back, and fetch the Age of Gold ;  
And speckled Vanity  
Will sicken soon and die,  
And leprous Sin will melt from earthly mould ;  
    And Hell itself will pass away,  
And leave her dolorous mansions to the peering  
    day.

**Y**EA, Truth and Justice then  
Will down return to men,  
Orb'd in a rainbow ; and, like glories wearing,  
Mercy will sit between,  
Throned in celestial sheen,  
With radiant feet the tissued clouds down steering;  
And Heaven, as at some festival,  
Will open wide the gates of her high palace hall.





**B**UT wisest Fate says No,  
This must not yet be so ;  
The Babe yet lies in smiling infancy,  
That on the bitter cross  
Must redeem our loss ;  
So both himself and us to glorify :  
    Yet first, to those ychain'd in sleep,  
The wakeful trump of doom must thunder through  
    the deep,

WITH such a horrid clang  
As on Mount Sinai rang,  
While the red fire and smouldering clouds out  
    brake :  
The aged Earth, aghast  
With terror of that blast,  
Shall from the surface to the centre shake ;  
    When, at the world's last session,  
The dreadful Judge in middle air shall spread his  
    throne.

AND then at last our bliss  
Full and perfect is,  
But now begins ; for, from this happy day,  
The Old Dragon, underground  
In straiter limits bound,  
Not half so far casts his usurped sway ;  
    And, wroth to see his kingdom fail,  
Swindges the scaly horror of his folded tail.

**T**HE Oracles are dumb ;  
No voice or hideous hum  
Runs through the arched roof in words deceiving.  
Apollo from his shrine  
Can no more divine,  
With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.  
No nightly trance, or breathed spell,  
Inspires the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic  
cell.



**T**HE lonely mountains o'er,  
And the resounding shore,  
A voice of weeping heard and loud lament :  
From haunted spring and dale,  
Edged with poplar pale,  
The parting Genius is with sighing sent :  
    With flower-inwoven tresses torn,  
The Nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets  
    mourn.





**I**N consecrated earth,  
And on the holy hearth,  
The Lars and Lemures moan with midnight plaint :  
In urns, and altars round,  
A drear and dying sound  
Affrights the flamens at their service quaint ;  
And the chill marble seems to sweat,  
While each peculiar Power forgoes his wonted  
seat.

**P** EOR and Baälim

Forsake their temples dim,  
With that twice-batter'd god of Palestine ;  
And mooned Ashtaroth,  
Heaven's queen and mother both,  
Now sits not girt with tapers' holy shine :  
    The Libyc Hammon shrinks his horn ;  
In vain the Tyrian maids their wounded Thammuz  
    mourn :





**A**ND sullen Moloch, fled,

Hath left in shadows dread

His burning idol all of blackest hue :

In vain with cymbals' ring

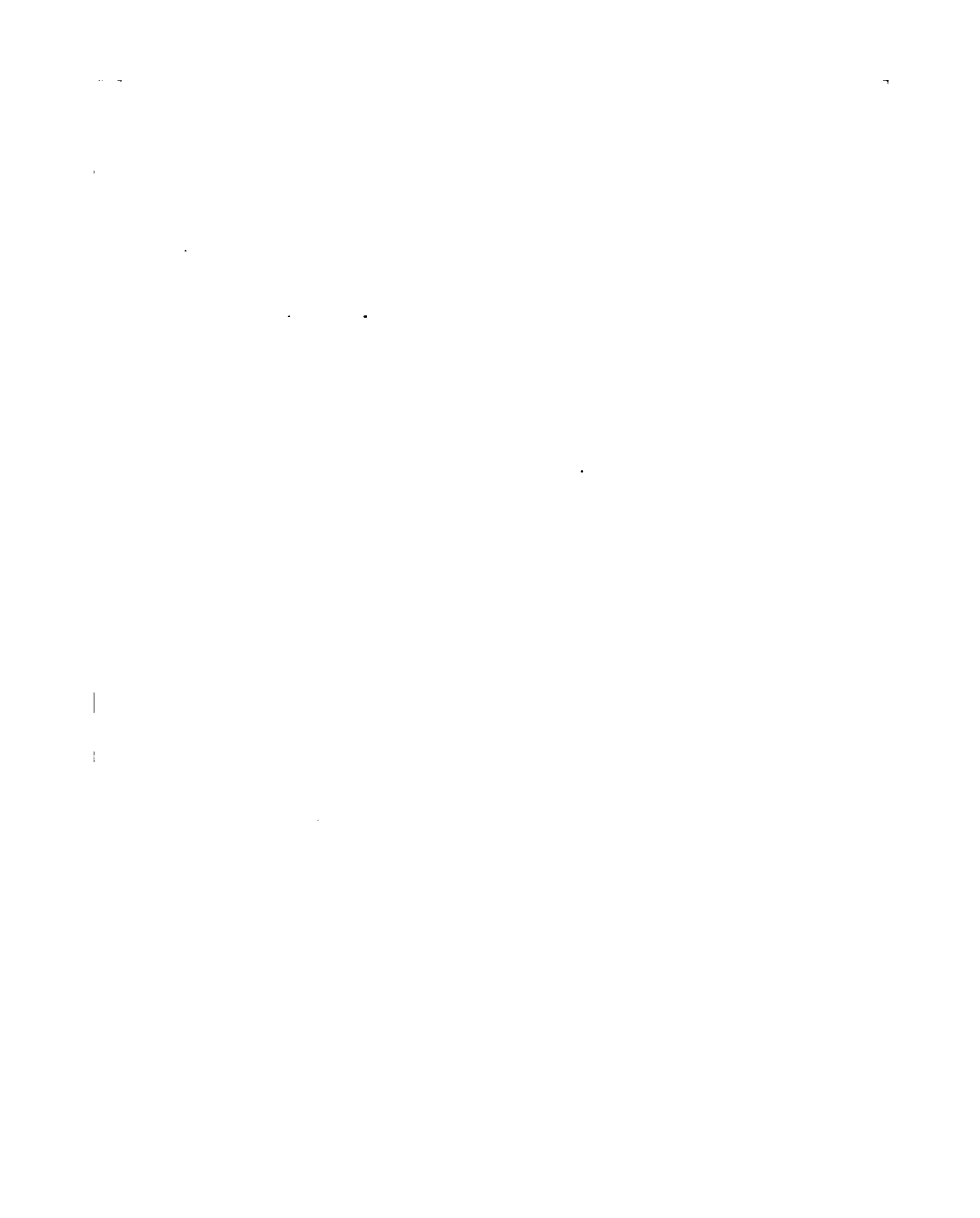
They call the grisly king,

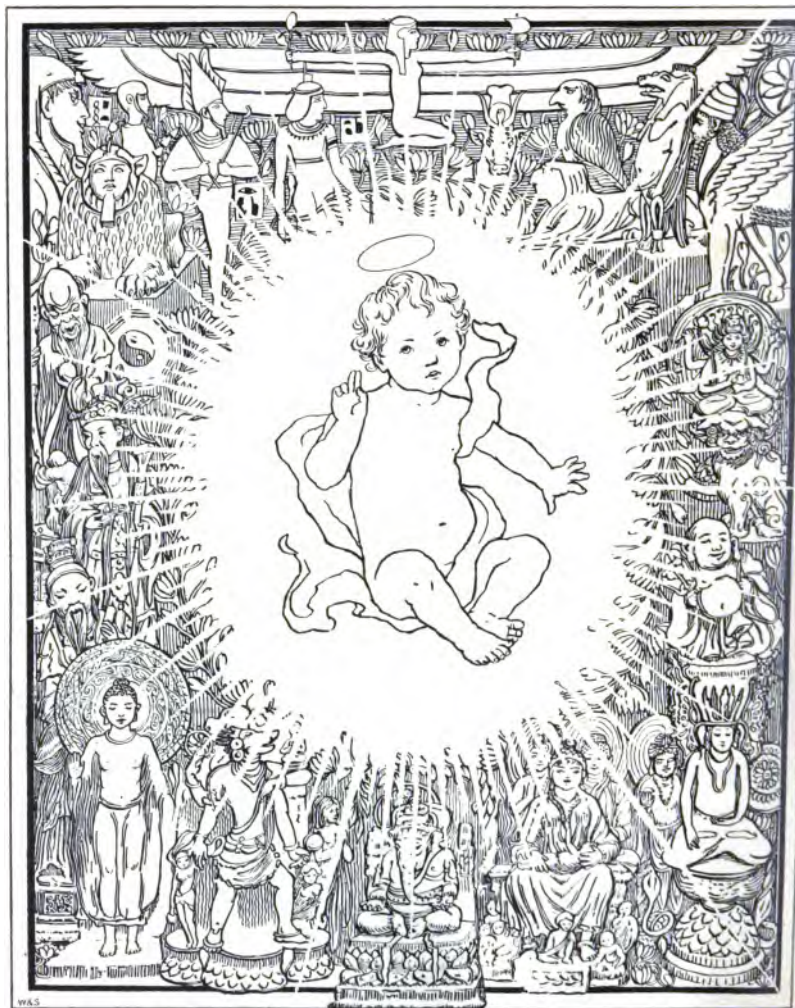
In dismal dance about the furnace blue :

The brutish gods of Nile as fast,

Isis, and Orus, and the dog Anubis, haste :

**N**OR is Osiris seen  
In Memphian grove or green,  
Trampling the unshower'd grass with lowings loud:  
Nor can he be at rest  
Within his sacred chest ;  
Nought but profoundest hell can be his shroud :  
    In vain with timbrell'd anthems dark  
The sable-stoled sorcerers bear his worshipp'd ark.





**H**E feels from Juda's land  
The dreaded Infant's hand ;  
The rays of Bethlehem blind his dusky eyn :  
Nor all the gods beside  
Longer dare abide ;  
Nor Typhon huge ending in snaky twine :  
Our Babe, to shew his Godhead true,  
Can in his swaddling bands control the damned  
crew.

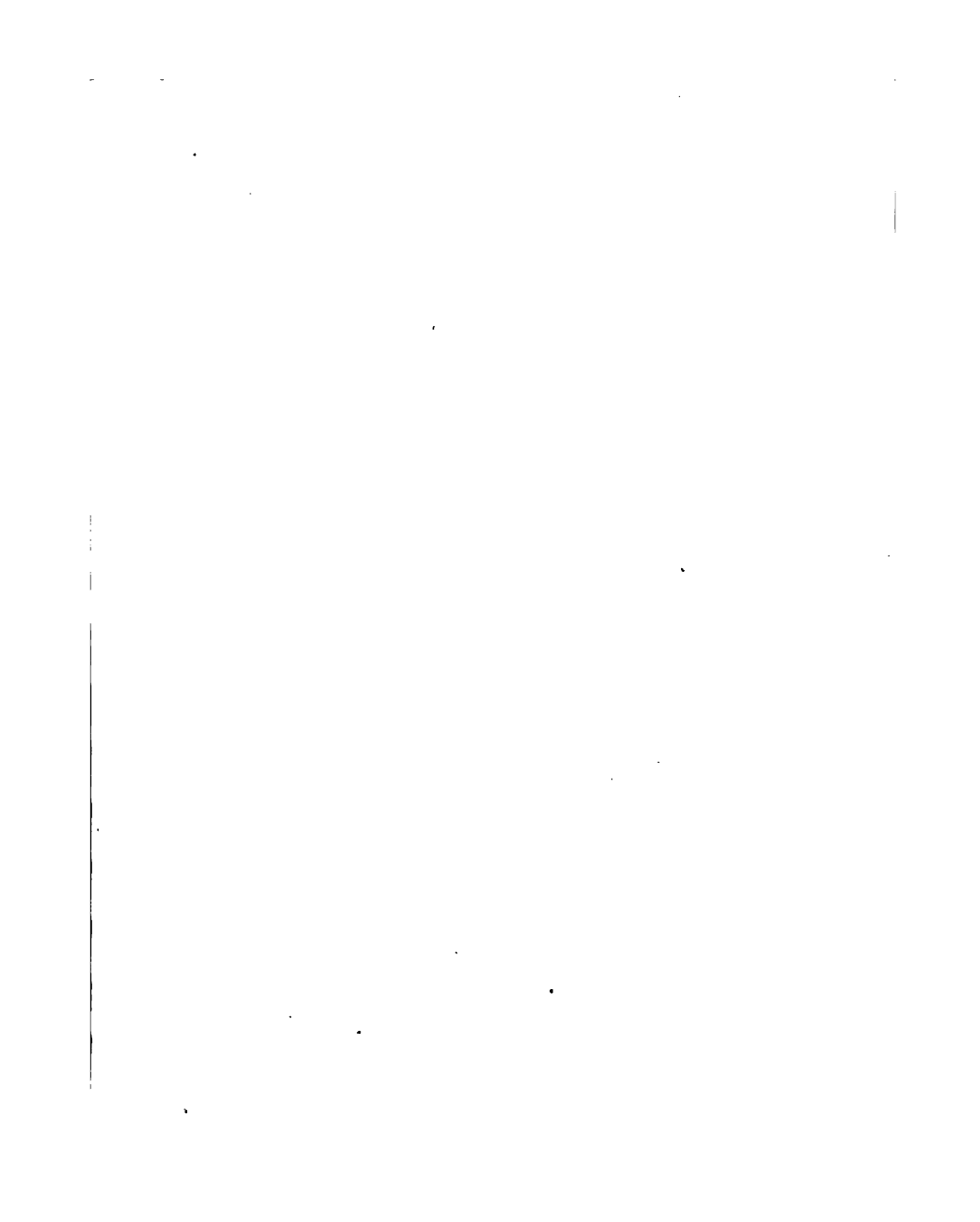
So when the sun in bed,  
Curtained with cloudy red,  
Pillows his chin upon an orient wave,  
The flocking shadows pale  
Troop to the infernal jail ;  
Each fetter'd ghost slips to his several grave ;  
    And the yellow-skirted fays  
Fly after the night-steeds, leaving their moon-loved  
    maze.



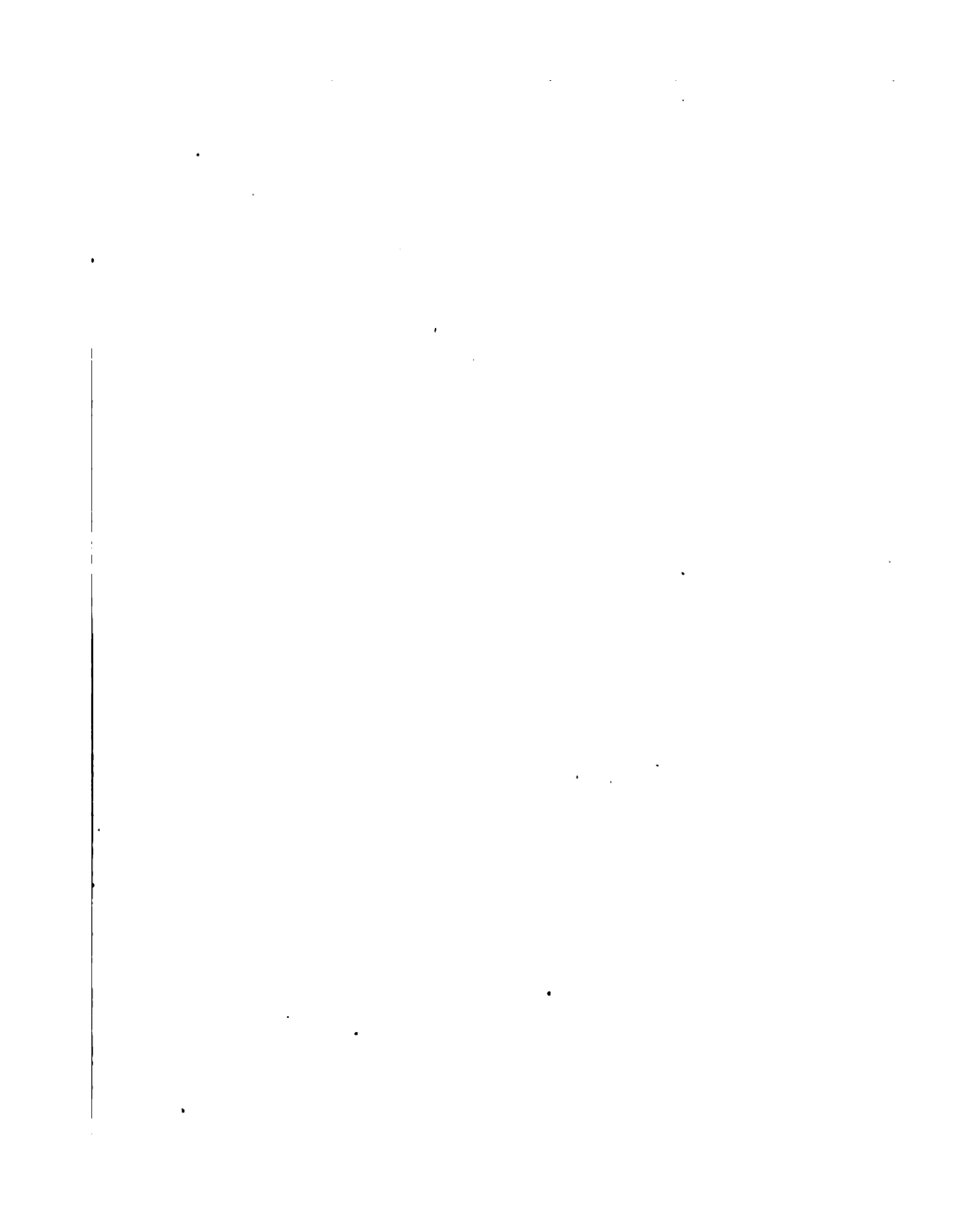


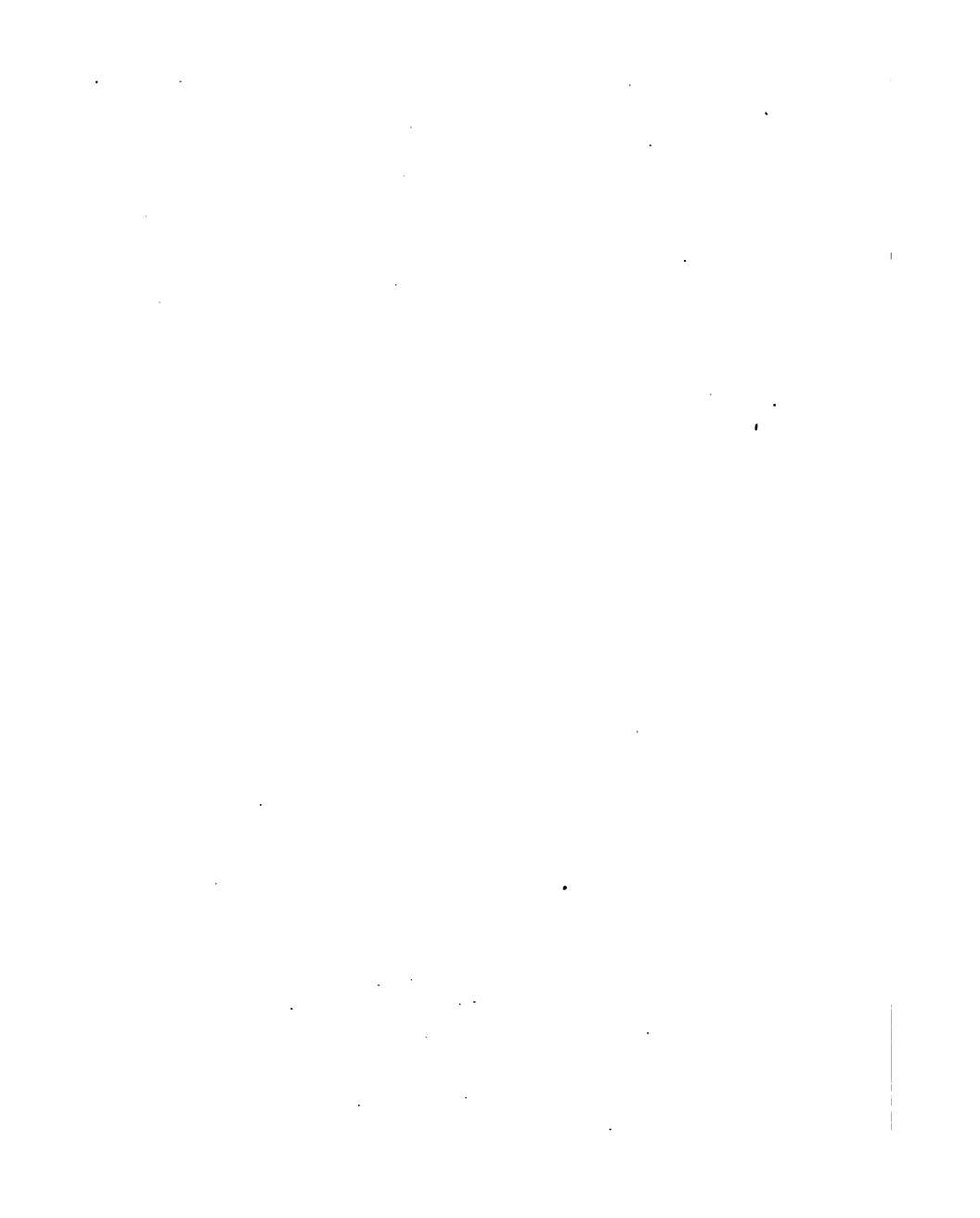
**B**UT see! the Virgin bless'd  
Hath laid her Babe to rest :  
Time is, our tedious song should here have ending ;  
Heaven's youngest-teemed star  
Hath fix'd her polish'd car,  
Her sleeping Lord with handmaid lamp attending :  
And all about the courtly stable  
Bright-harness'd Angels sit in order serviceable.

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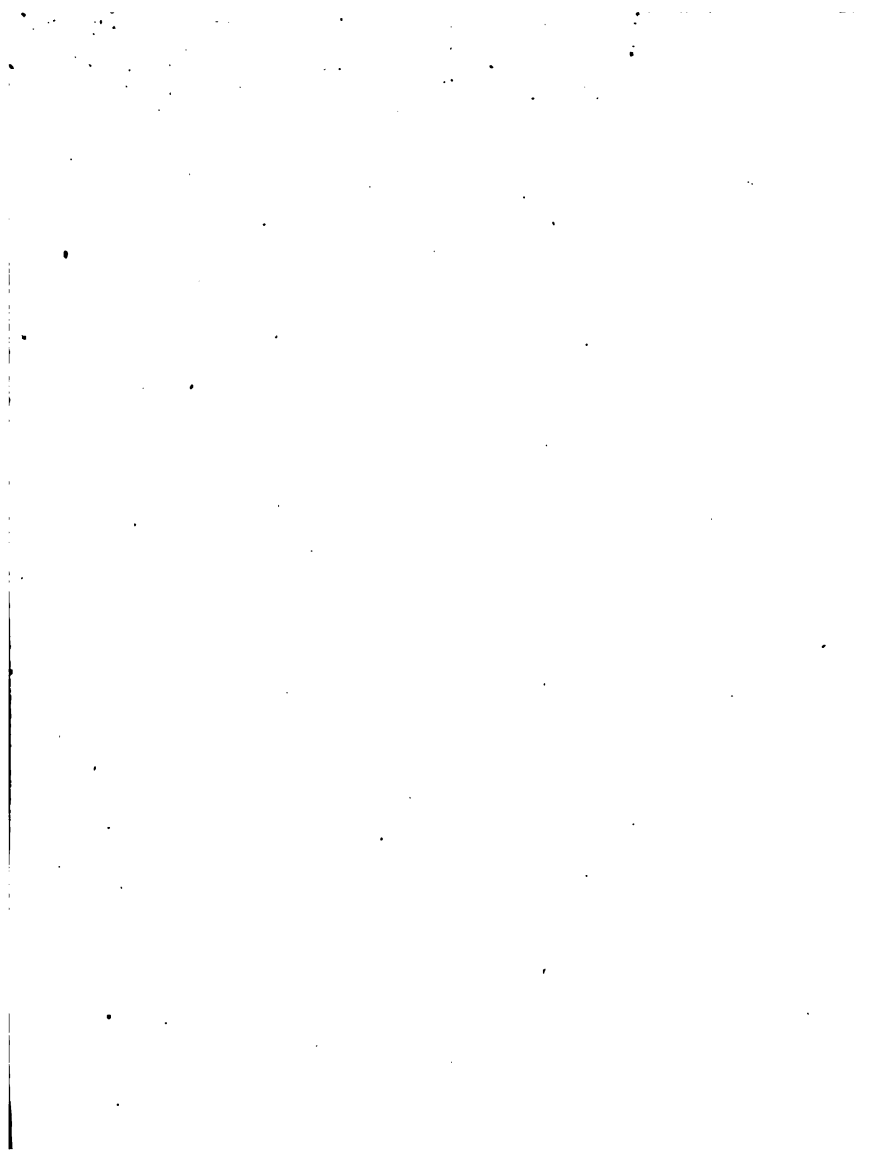




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